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THE GOLF BALL.

How Gravity Is Foiled in Its Flight Through the Air.

Professor Petrie Guthrie Tait had little skill at golf, but a vast deal at science. Among the many problems to which he applied his genius were some concerning that apparently simple thing, the flight of a golf ball. And here he found difficulties so baffling that, though he worked over them for years and called on other scientists for assistance, many mysteries still remained. One question that he solved, however, is of curious interest.

The force of gravity is the one force we know as most constant and inevitable. To defeat gravity is almost to suspend one of nature's laws. In his investigations Professor Tait suddenly became aware that gravity was defeated by the golf ball. The fact admitted no doubt. On timing the flight of the ball he discovered that it remained in the air almost twice as long as it should have under the influence of gravity. Thus, with gravity acting as usual on other things, a drive of 200 yards would be completed in three and a half seconds. A thrown ball, for example, describing the same trajectory, would remain in the air only that length of time. The golf ball in passing over that 200 yards floated serenely through the air for six and a half seconds.

It was clear, then, that in some manner the gravity was thwarted. Professor Tait attacked the problem of the means, and in the end he solved it. After searching long he found the cause of the prolonged flight in the rotation given to the ball by the club's impact. The secret lay in the manner of the stroke from the tee.

The first principle of the explanation is in the simple fact that an object poised in the air has an equal atmospheric pressure on it at all points. The second principle is that when a sphere rotates in a current of air the side of the sphere which is advancing to meet the current is subjected to greater pressure than is that side which is moving in the direction of the current. To illustrate, when the golfer slices his ball it is made to spin in such fashion that its front side is constantly in movement to the right. Therefore the pressure of the air is greater on the left side than on the right, and the ball curves to the right. When the ball is pulled, the operation is reversed, and the flight bends away to the left. So if the ball is topped the spinning direction of the front is downward. Thus the pull of gravity is aided and the flight is swiftly checked. But every properly driven ball receives an undercut. By the underspin thus imparted the front side of the ball is made to spin upward; the added pressure is from below and is in consequence directly opposed to gravity. The result is a flight sustained, but little less than twice as long as it would be without this underspin. Moreover, Professor Tait demonstrated that without this undercut when driving the ball would travel only about half its usual distance.

The ordinary golfer is quite unaware that he gives any underspin to his best drives, but he does. Without the undercut his driving would be a continuous failure.—Chicago Record-Herald.

A Chaotic Child.

Surely the mystery of life was greater than the mystery of death in the case of a five-months-old child which has been the subject of an inquest at Battersea. It had what the doctor calls "drumstick" fingers and toes, its heart was on the right side instead of the left, the position of the lungs was reversed, the aorta curved down the right side instead of the left, there was no spleen, the liver was on the wrong side, and there was no division between the two chambers of the heart, while the artery which should have supplied the lungs with blood was closed, the blood passing through a communication between the aorta and the remaining portion of the pulmonary artery. With all this jumbled anatomy the child lived, and the medical evidence proved that its death was not directly due to the disarranged organs, but to an attack of bronchitis. Still, death came mercifully, for the medical view was that if the little one had lived until it could stand it would have died of heart disease. That it breathed at all proves the tenacity of life and forms a comment on the vast sacrifice of healthily constituted children which annually results from negligence.—Pall Mall Gazette.

THE RACCOON.

In Its Habits This Animal Greatly Resembles the Bear.

A coon seems to be a composite animal, made up of parts of bear, fisher and monkey, with considerable devil thrown in for luck, says a writer in Forest and Stream. He can use his fore paws as handily as a monkey, and what he cannot undo with his hands he can gnaw off with his teeth. As Miss Murfree—Charles Egbert Craddock—says in one of her stories, he has "a great deal of head stuffing." Any one who disbelieves in original sin had better keep a raccoon for a pet or try trapping one.

In captivity raccoons are very cleanly, often washing their hands and always washing every kind of food except eggs before eating. They know all about eggs without any teaching. One will take a hen's egg and, lying on its back, will toss it up and catch it as if it were a ball until, becoming tired of this amusement, he will hold it in the left hand and by tapping it lightly with one nail will drill a small hole in one end and then suck the contents. Its holding capacity is considerable, as I have known a tame one which got loose to kill a sitting hen and suck thirteen eggs. In this case thirteen was an unlucky number for the owner of the hen.

Raccoons love the vicinity of water, where they catch frogs and pick up some dead fish. In their habits they greatly resemble bears, and, like bears, they eat any kind of flesh or fish and most sorts of berries, nuts and grain; but, unlike bears, they do not remain steadily in their dens, but often, at any time in winter when there is a warm spell or a thaw, they will come out and travel for miles, sometimes going into open water to dig for frogs. A number of times when there were several feet of snow I have caught them in traps set for other both in springs and in water too swift to freeze. Although I never trapped coons purposely, because they are not worth it, I have caught them in traps set for nearly everything else. One of the most comical sights I ever saw was a large coon caught by both fore feet in a beaver trap. He was standing on his hind feet, turning the trap first one way and then another, seeming to be studying what it was that had caught him.

The Young Idea.

The following are specimens of some absurd and amusing answers made by schoolboys and schoolgirls in examination papers:

Iron is grown in large quantities for manufacturing purposes in southern France.

Q. Define the first person. A. Adam. A parallel straight line is one that when produced to meet itself must not meet.

Blood consists of two sorts of corkscrews, red corkscrews and white corkscrews.

Asked to explain what a buttress is, one boy replied, "A woman who makes butter."

Teacher's dictation: "His choler rose to such a height that passion well nigh choked him." Pupil's reproduction: "His collar rose to such a height that fashion well nigh choked him."

Gravity was discovered by Isaac Walton. It is chiefly noticeable in the autumn, when the apples are falling from the trees.

The diet of Worms is the grub that blackbirds and thrushes feed on.—Harper's Weekly.

Transvaal Terminations.

In perusing the names of South African towns in the daily newspapers many must have noted the word "fontein," which appears so often. This word is the English fountain, and towns with this termination have been named after Dutch farms, which are always built beside fountains of spring water. Thus Bloemfontein means "flowery fountain," Modderfontein, "muddy fountain," Klenfontein, "small fountain," and Ellandsfontein, "deer fountain." Another town termination which English readers must have noticed is that of "laagte," which is pronounced "laughty." It means "shelter for animals," and hence when we talk of the battle of Ellandslaagte we may know that it was fought on a spot frequented by deer.—London Globe.

Study at Home.

"Maud graduated from your cooking school last spring, didn't she?" "Yes, but she's going to take a post-graduate course next fall."

"Going back to the same school again?"

"Oh, no! She's to be married to a poor young man."—Catholic Standard and Times.

A FAMOUS OLD MART

Christie's of London, Most Noted of All Sales Rooms.

KNOWN ALL OVER THE WORLD

A Place Rich in Memories of Reynolds, Garrick, Gainsborough and Lord Chesterfield—Fake Art Treasures, Romances of the Auction Room.

Since James Christie and his friends Sir Joshua Reynolds, David Garrick and Thomas Gainsborough received Lord Chesterfield in Pall Mall as he descended from his coach and six the most precious things that money can buy have changed hands in the famous rooms that bear Christie's name.

In those days Christie took great pains to attract only the "elect," and the cards of visitors were carefully scrutinized by liveried flunkies at the door, for here was an exclusive club where men of rank and fashion often gathered to exchange courtesies and the gossip of court and camp, quite apart from mere bidding for great estates and palaces of many nations. Jewels of princes and plate of great families, pictures and porcelain, statuary and curios. Who does not remember the sale of Gainsborough's "Duchess of Devonshire" when Lord Dudley wired a bid of \$50,000 from Paris, but was beaten by Agnew, the dealer? And then came the dramatic theft and the equally dramatic recovery of the portrait years afterward in this country.

It is a place of beautiful things, of discreet hush, of subdued mystery. Almost every great work of art in the world that comes into the market finds its way there. Long before 1766 Christie's was a going concern, none too flourishing, he it said, for has not James Christie himself left it on record that his good friend David Garrick tided him over a bankruptcy with a loan of \$50,000?

The priced catalogues of the house have been and are the standard record of values in works of art for the last 200 years. They show extraordinary fluctuations. Thus in 1755 a copy of the Rembrandt etching "Christ Healing the Sick" sold for only \$35, whereas in 1887, at the Duke of Buccleuch's sale, an inferior example brought no less than \$6,500. Art collections worth \$10,000,000 and upward have frequently been offered for sale in these classic rooms. On such occasions emperors and kings, with men of wealth from every nation, commission the greatest of experts to go to criticize and bid for treasures which may not come under the hammer again in generations.

The value of property knocked down under the old cracked ivory hammer that Dr. Johnson and Goldsmith must have handled baffles all calculation. A curious record was the \$75,000 paid in 1885 for the Dudley Raphael "The Three Graces," which measures only seven inches square. Of course this was extraordinary, yet enormous prices have been paid at Christie's for pictures, as everybody knows.

Another record in its day was the \$73,760 paid for Hoppner's three-quarter length portrait of Louisa, Lady Manners, afterward Countess of Dy-sart. And then there was the famous jeweled cup of rock crystal, which brought the enormous sum of \$81,375 at the Gabbittas sale. Amazing prices have also been recorded for porcelain. In a recent season the art worlds of London and Paris were startled by a Sevres vase bringing \$21,000—proof positive that the pate tendre, the plaything of Louis the Well Beloved, the Pompadour and Du Barry, retains all its fascination for the collector.

Rarely indeed have fakes been offered at Christie's, yet a few classic cases are on record. Some years ago art loving capitals were startled by the announcement that four superb gallery pictures by Constable and two by Turner were to be offered for sale in Christie's rooms, "the property of a private gentleman and never before exhibited." It was certainly an event. The vendor's name was withheld, but this is a common occurrence, seeing that very exalted personages, indeed, not to say the occupants of thrones, frequently send works of art to these famous galleries. Pressed on the subject, however, Christie's gave out that the seller was a "well known connoisseur of high social rank." On the day of the sale all the art critics, collectors and dealers of note from London to Moscow and from Stockholm to Madrid assembled before the pictures, chattering excitedly in many tongues.

Truly they were imposing, these gorgeous canvases, five feet wide and high in proportion. The four Constables formed a series of superb English landscapes, while the two Turners were classical subjects, said to be of the "middle period" of the master. But about them all there was a certain "I know not what," as the French say, that baffled the keen critics. Round all six appeared to hover a curious kinship, certain peculiarities of touch and coloring, "as if," in the words of a Paris dealer, "Turner had worked on Constable's pictures and Constable on Turner's."

The faces of the experts were a droll study as their first admiration gave place to helpless bewilderment. One or two they might have swallowed, but six! Before long a Viennese artist made himself heard above the hubbub by pointing out that the pictures were largely painted with very modern pigments—fashionable, newly invented colors unknown in the days of Turner and Constable. The excitement grew

greater. This was surely an unlucky slip if the collection were forgeries. There was yet another test, however. A cunning Venetian dealer years previously had given the art world a hint

in testing an authentic example of Guardi. He would take a pin and try to stick it into the fattest and most unctuously pasted part of the picture. "If it sticks in," the dealer said, "it is new paint, but try it on a real Guardi, and you might as well try to force a pin into a china plate." The moment that hint was remembered it was acted upon. One of the Constables was tested and proved to be a veritable pin cushion.

The authorities of Christie's at once closed their doors and posted a notice abandoning the sale.

The history of the forgeries leaked out afterward. They had belonged to a rich and eccentric collector, Joseph Gillott, a millionaire manufacturer of steel pens of Birmingham, who afterward left the London National gallery a magnificent series of real treasures. In his latter years, however, the old man had fallen into the clutches of an unscrupulous dealer whose exploits had long been notorious. Both the Turners and the Constables had been manufactured under this man's direction by a needy but exceedingly clever artist and then sold to the aged and credulous amateur for \$500,000. When later some doubts were cast upon their genuineness Gillott was greatly troubled and resolved to give them the public test of auction at Christie's. After the dramatic fiasco their owner contemptuously packed them off into a warehouse, which three months later was burned to the ground, and then, strangely enough, it turned out that Gillott had insured his "masterpieces" for the entire sum he had paid for them, so by a curious turn of the wheel of fortune he was not a penny the loser.

But there have not been half a dozen such cases at Christie's during a century of sales.

And, by the way, just inside the superb pillared portico on King street, St. James', one will see a picture of the courtly old dandy, Christie himself, tall and distinguished, in silk knee breeches, with low shoes and buckles, blue silk coat and delicate lace ruffles, with full wig and horn spectacles, as befitting his association with aristocratic cognoscenti.

Chesterfield was his patron then, as he had been Dr. Johnson's. The great arbiter of elegance, although retired from public life, was renowned all over Europe as a connoisseur, and when old Christie pleaded with him to lend his aegis to a great sale the stately coach and six emblazoned with the Chesterfield arms would soon be at the door. The rooms were then in Pall Mall. Liveried servants cleared a way for Chesterfield and escorted him to a throne-like seat on a dais, where a nod of commendation might be seen of all and have its due effect on the bids.

The French revolution was the ill wind that blew fortune toward Christie's. In 1792 many fugitives from France, Italy and Holland made their way to London and on arrival found their flight had been so precipitate that they were actually embarrassed for ready money. And that meant a sale of pictures and curios, furniture, jewels and plate. It was in this way that the British aristocracy became possessed of some of the loveliest works of art the world holds.

During the London season, from April to the end of June, Christie's palatial staircase and salons are thronged with men and women of rank and fashion from half a dozen nations. In 1893 the old place was practically rebuilt both inside and out. The principal sales room, a lofty and elegant octagonal apartment, is a copy of one built in the Adelphi by Adam. And the auctioneer's rostrum is one he used over a century and a half ago in the old rooms. In itself a work of art of great value, it is a superb specimen of Chippendale's own work.

The old Christie family has quite died out of the house, which at present is run by men of high social rank and vast experience. Sales are held three or four times a week. From the earliest days Saturday has been reserved for great pictures. Viewing the galleries before a sale begins one will see leading men in statecraft and society, princes and princesses of royal blood, merchants of great wealth and influence and visiting Americans as well as agents acting for cultured countrymen.

Each sale furnishes some little romance of the art world. Every picture seems to have a history. Here, hung in a grand light in the big salon, is the "Family of Darius," which Paul Veronese painted during his convalescence from an illness in an Italian villa and left behind as a graceful token of favors and kindnesses received from his host. More than \$88,000 was paid for this picture in Christie's rooms one Saturday afternoon as it hung in the midst of other paintings from ancient country houses and faded palaces of many lands.

One wonders whether the shades of the artists hang about this abode of romance. Did George Morland see his little "Dancing Dogs," which he was glad to paint for \$75 in hard times, find a buyer at \$27,000? Did grim Sir Henry Raeburn hear J. Pierpont Morgan bidding \$45,675 for that charming portrait of his wife in white and brown? Or did starving John Hoppner, born to grinding poverty in sordid Whitechapel, see a pair of his portraits go for \$49,935?

These things are part of the romance of Christie's.—W. G. Fitz-Gerald in New York Tribune.

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